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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fairfax Planning Commission has initiated discussions regarding a complete update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, which was most recently amended in 2012. During the initial stages of these discussions, a series of Briefing Papers will be published on matters related to planning. The topics of the papers include:

- ⇒ Comprehensive plan mechanics
- ⇒ Regional development snapshot
- ⇒ Census 2010 data update
- ⇒ Public facilities and lands
- ⇒ Sustainability and the environment
- ⇒ Multimodal transportation
- ⇒ Parking
- ⇒ Economic development opportunities and partnerships
- ⇒ Land use and zoning
- ⇒ Fiscal impact analysis
- ⇒ Models of development

The papers are intended to provide information that will be useful as the process to draft a new Comprehensive Plan moves forward. The papers will explore the aforementioned topics in detail, providing both a local perspective and examples of best practices that may be applicable to the City of Fairfax. In addition, the papers will provide context for the discussion by providing background information and, when applicable, a glossary of terms.

In recent years, the City has made significant investments in its public facilities such as schools, community centers, administrative buildings, and in its lands, such as parks, playing fields, and open spaces. These facilities and lands are well-used and appreciated by the citizens of Fairfax. While demographic shifts and the age of structures will facilitate the need for ongoing monitoring and maintenance of public facilities, the City has a very strong portfolio of properties moving into the future. In order to continue to build upon this foundation, both traditional financing methods

and creative development mechanisms such as public-private partnerships are likely to be utilized in the future. In addition, attention to the changes over time in desires and attitudes, particularly toward recreation and leisure activities, will allow the City to continue to provide a high level of service to its citizens. This briefing paper will review the following:

- ⇒ needs and capacity analysis
- ⇒ economic value
- ⇒ current gaps in service delivery
- ⇒ opportunities for linkages
- ⇒ tools for assessment and implementation

## INTRODUCTION

A community's public facilities and park system are part of what defines a government's commitment to meeting the needs of its' citizens. Services such as public safety, education, parks and recreation, and general government play a vital role in how a community operates, perceives itself and is perceived by others. It is important to strike the right balance that helps the community not only function but thrive. The City of Fairfax has shown a continued investment in providing quality facilities and services for its community.

## CITY FACILITIES

### *Administration and Operations*

City Hall, originally built in 1962 and expanded in 2007, acts as the central facility for the City's administration. In addition to housing a majority of the City's departments, City Hall acts as a meeting place for Council, boards and commissions, committees, and civic organizations. Also located on City Hall grounds, the Sisson House is home to two City departments, the School Board and General Registrar.

The Property Yard located on Pickett Road contains numerous Public Works functions including fleet maintenance, sign manufacturing and operation of the recycling drop-off center. Other utility related City owned facilities include a water treatment plant and two reservoirs

in eastern Loudoun County, three water towers and four pumping stations.

### *Public Safety*

The Police Department, previously located in the former John C. Wood elementary school on Old Lee Highway, is housed in a 32,200-square foot facility completed in 2007 on the same grounds as the former station. The station includes modern features and rooms needed for up-to-date police operations and technological requirements.

The Fire Department, a combination of City employees and volunteers, operates out of three facilities outside of City Hall. Fire Station #3 is a four-story building owned by the volunteer fire department on University Drive and is the main station with administrative offices of the Chief, Assistant Chief, and other command staff personnel. Station #33 on Fairfax Boulevard is a smaller station of one story with a loft, which was originally constructed in

*View of City Hall from Armstrong Street*

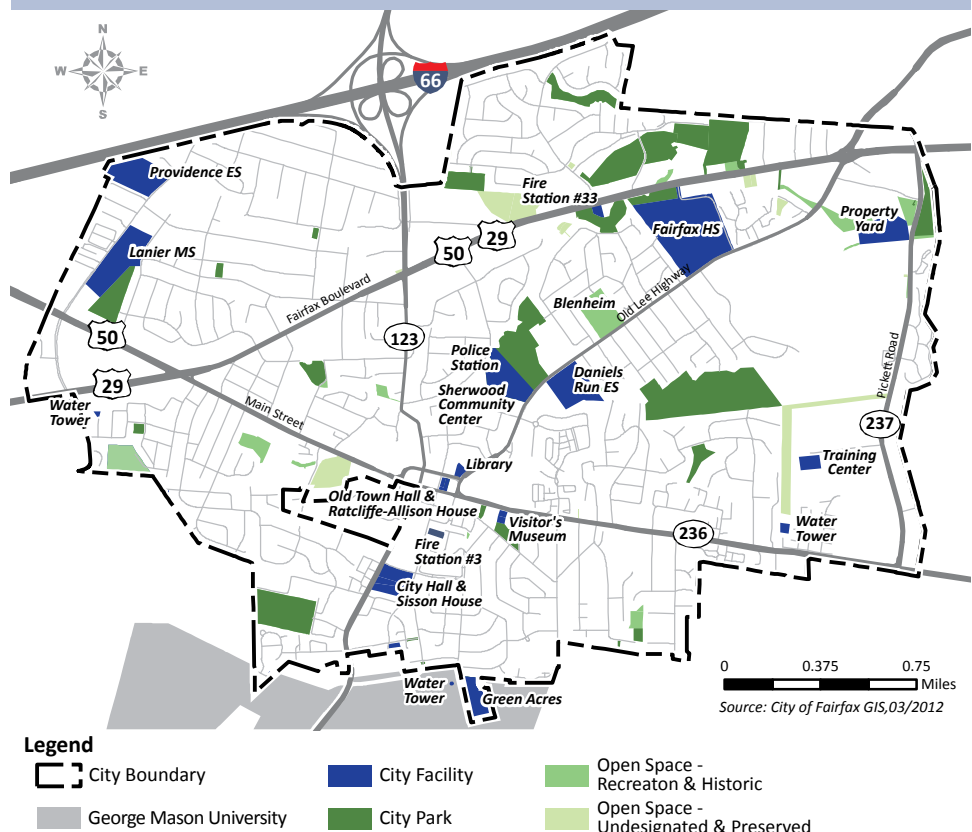


## MAP A: Public Facilities and Lands

1979 and added on to in 1995. The Public Safety Training Center located on Colonial Avenue on a portion of the tank farm property includes an environmentally-friendly propane-fueled burn building used to conduct live exercises and a high bay building to conduct training during all weather conditions. Fairfax County personnel also utilize the Training Center.

## Community Centers

The City currently has two community center facilities; the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center built adjacent to the Police Station on Old Lee Highway and opened in 2011, and the Green Acres Center, a former school now housing the senior center and many community classes. The Parks and Recreation Department also organizes after school programs at Daniels Run Elementary and Providence Elementary. Enrollment in programs at the Sherwood Center has increased in youth participation (147 to 222) and more than doubled in adult participation (32 to 71) over the last year. Attendance at the Senior Center at Green Acres has also nearly doubled from 739 in February 2011 to 1,407 in February 2012. The programs are also open to non-City residents and are well attended as shown in the participation chart to the right.

CITY VS. NON-CITY PARTICIPANTS  
IN PARKS AND RECREATION  
PROGRAMS

Program	Resident Total %	Non-Resident Total %
Day Camp	71%	29%
Senior Center Members	47%	53%
Senior Programs	57%	43%
Community Programs	91%	9%
Sherwood Programs	78%	22%
Green Acres Programs	58%	42%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>

The Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center





## SCHOOLS

*Historic Buildings*

The City owns several historic buildings that are popular facilities for social and educational use. The Fairfax Museum and Visitors Center, housed in the Old Fairfax Elementary School constructed in 1873; Old Town Hall, built in 1900; the Ratcliffe-Allison House built in 1812 with subsequent additions in the 1820s and 1920s; and the Blenheim Estate built around 1855. All of these historic sites have undergone repair and renovation, and several are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

*(Top) Blenheim Estate ; (Bottom Left); Fairfax Museum and Visitors Center; (Bottom Right) Old Town Hall*

*Library*

The City of Fairfax Regional Library located at the intersection of Old Lee Highway and North Street is part of Fairfax County's library system of eight regional and fourteen community libraries. The City's library was constructed in 2008 and is the largest in the County system at over 44,000 square feet with a 200-space parking garage.

Before Fairfax became an independent City in 1961, it was a town in Fairfax County and the schools were part of the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) system. When the town gained City status, state law required that a local school board be organized to govern the schools. The City and County entered into a School Services Agreement to enable the City School Board and Superintendent to manage the schools located in the City. The Fairfax County School Board has administrative and operational control of City schools.

The City's School Board's duties include appointing and evaluating the division superintendent; establishing policies; controlling City school finances, including, but not limited to, examining and approving the budget and capital outlays, awarding contracts, and overseeing all business transactions; presenting the needs of the schools to the Mayor and City Council; and representing the schools and educational program before the public.

The City owns the four schools located in the City: Fairfax High School, Lanier Middle School, Daniels Run Elementary School and Providence Elementary School, serving nearly 5,500 students total. Daniels Run and Providence elementary schools completed major renovations in 2000. Lanier Middle School and Fairfax High School completed extensive renovations in 2007 and 2008 respectively, including adding 86,500 square feet of classroom space to Fairfax High School. The City also owns two other elementary school buildings; Westmore, which is slated for demolition to provide increased park and open space amenities, and Green Acres, which currently serves as a community center as previously noted as well as rental space for day care and home schooling.

*City of Fairfax Regional Library on North Street*



## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The City is dedicated to providing quality open space and recreation facilities for its residents and visitors. The City's diverse network of public parks and open space areas on 239 acres includes 24 parks with pavilions, play equipment and sports fields, natural areas, informal open spaces and 27 miles of trails, 12.4 miles of which are off-street paths. (See map attachment for locations) The Veteran's Amphitheater, Community Garden and a large grass area with benches — located on the grounds of City Hall — are not identified as public parks or open space, however, they are open to public use.

Using funds from an open space bond referendum in 2000, the City was able to purchase eight parcels totaling nearly 44 acres and costing \$12.2 million. By 2008, the newly acquired parcels increased the City's open space, park, and field inventory by 24 percent.

Parks and open space preservation is a noted priority of the City's residents. During the comprehensive plan update public outreach in 2004, common themes

were identified related to parks, open space and trails throughout the public comments, including:

- ◆ *Preserve and expand green space in the City*
- ◆ *Recognize a new class of parks called "Nature Preserves", a protected area of importance for wildlife, flora, fauna or other special features, with Daniels Run being the first to be identified as such*
- ◆ *Connect the open spaces in the City via bike trails and connect the trails themselves*
- ◆ *Design/maintain City properties and unused rights-of-way*

In May 2007, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) and staff conducted a Community Attitudes and Interest Survey (CAIS) in cooperation with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, in which 2,000 City households were sent surveys, of which 448 were completed and returned. The facilities that respondent households rated as the most important include: paved walking and biking trails (35%), small community parks (35%), indoor exercise and fitness facilities (19%), unpaved hiking trails (19%), and indoor swimming pools (19%).

### 2007 VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN PARK & RECREATION TERMS

#### Open space

Minimally developed land that is public or privately owned, including scenic rural landscapes, urban greenspace, greenways, trails, undeveloped riparian lands and floodplains, historic landscapes, parkland and undeveloped recreation areas, forests, farmland, and undisturbed natural environments and wildlife habitat.

#### Active recreation

Activity that is usually more strenuous or organized and generally requires more developed facilities than passive recreation.

#### Passive recreation

Activity that is initiated by individuals that can be less strenuous and generally requires less developed facilities than active recreation.



### GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

In 2011 the City of Fairfax received the National Gold Medal Award by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The City was a finalist for the Gold Medal in 2010. The Gold Medal Award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition.

## THE VALUE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

It is difficult to place an exact dollar amount on the benefits of quality parks, open space and public facilities. These, however, do provide economic value that can be measured. For example, according to a study by the Trust for Public Land, “Seattle’s parks generate \$14.8 million each year in increased property tax receipts and \$4.4 million in taxes attributed to increased tourism.” Similarly in a 2004 study, the National Park Service (NPS) found that the Washington & Old Dominion Trail brought an estimated \$7 million into the Northern Virginia economy.

Parks and public green spaces can also increase revenue for local commercial districts. Surveys have indicated that consumers rated the products from commercial areas with trees thirty percent higher than areas with no landscaping. Similarly the landscaped commercial areas on average were able to price similar items eleven percent higher than their less green counterparts. The NPS has identified many examples of trails spurring economic revitalization, for example, “downtown Dunedin, Florida was suffering a 35 percent storefront vacancy rate until an abandoned CSX railroad track became the Pinellas Trail. Storefront occupancy is now 100 percent.” The National Association of State Park Directors has identified a number of economic benefits of parks include drawing companies to locate in towns with accessibility to parks and open space to provide an improved quality of life for their employees.

Proximity to parks, open space and trails can also have a positive effect on residential areas. According to surveys conducted by the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors in 2002 and 2004, a majority of consumers want a pedestrian-friendly community with a mix of open space, including parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, nature preserves and undeveloped areas. “A number of empirical studies have shown that proximity to preserved open space enhances property values, particularly if the open space is not intensively developed for recreation purposes”(Lincoln Institute of Land Policy). Realtors and residential developers often find that access and proximity to walking

*Walking path between Daniels Run and Farrcroft*



and biking facilities are also beneficial to home sales. According to a sustainability strategy and communications consultant that works with localities, “Properties near bike paths increase in value 11 percent.”

In 2001, Dr. John Crompton of Texas A&M University compiled results of 25 studies on the effects of open space on property values. Crompton found that 20 of the 25 studies reviewed concluded that open space and parks increased the values of nearby properties. In addition to proximity of homes to parks and open space, the size, type, access to and quality of the space can affect the home values as well. Studies conducted in Portland, Oregon found that larger parks were generally considered more valuable than smaller pocket parks, however, a series of smaller parks that provide direct access to more homes could be considered more valuable than the single larger park. The studies also determined that parks bordered by roads were perceived as more accessible and therefore more valuable than parks surrounded by private lots.

The City has approved several residential developments that included open space and walkways into the designs.



## PLACE-MAKING

These amenities for potential home buyers also provided connections to nearby City paths and open spaces. Private investments in community open space in newer residential developments such as Farrcroft, Providence Square, Stonewall Estates, and Main Street Residences, to name a few, have complemented and expanded the reach of City trails and parks.

Increased property values associated to proximity with parks and open space have been identified in some of the developments in the City of Fairfax. In Pickett's Reserve, increased lot values range from 5 to 20% depending on proximity to open space or park land, with park land demanding the highest increased value. In Farrcroft, lot values increase approximately 5% for proximity to open space, trails, etc. However, while nearby property owners may benefit from the park, adjacency to or unobstructed views of a park or open space appear to be necessary to derive increased land values. It is also unclear what effect parks and open space have had on older established neighborhoods in the City.

Benefits that are not as simple to put monetary value on include physical and mental health, environmental impact reduction, and a sense of community cohesion. "Neighborhoods that provide trails, greenways, parks and sidewalks increase opportunities to be out and active, connect and interact in a shared environment." (Robinson)

*Gazebo located in the open space at Farrcroft*



Cities and neighborhoods with thriving civic spaces benefit from a strong sense of community. Public facilities and parks can be used as a cornerstone for creative place-making to help rejuvenate neighborhoods and commercial districts of many different scales. "Place-making is the art of shaping healthy, attractive communities by cultivating scale, density, and relationships among built and natural settings that promote the community's desired character." (Virginia APA)

Examples of the use of public spaces to create inviting environments is evident across Virginia. Some communities, such as Staunton, have chosen to reinforce their cultural and historic qualities through unique cultural offerings. Staunton features an authentic recreation of Shakespeare's indoor theatre the Blackfriars Playhouse, the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and a living history museum, the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia.

Charlottesville turned their historic downtown Main Street into an eight-block-long pedestrian mall comprised of a mix of restored and renovated buildings of more than 120 shops and 30 restaurants. Maintained by the Charlottesville Parks and Recreation Department, the plaza has many pedestrian amenities including clusters of mature trees to create shaded areas to enjoy outdoor music. Other amenities that enhance the shopping experience include flowing fountains, an ice skating rink, hands-on Virginia Discovery Museum, music, theatre and cinema. Old Town Winchester's Loudoun Street Pedestrian Mall offers locally-owned shops and unique boutiques and galleries. Proposed future renovations to the mall include entry features and a splash pad that can be converted to an ice skating rink.

The City of Fairfax has also made strategic decisions to position its public facilities to support a sense of place. The City of Fairfax Regional Library, which was relocated to the corner of North Street and Old Lee Highway, was placed in a highly visible location that contributes to the character of the downtown. Many visitor postings online have noted the library's welcoming atmosphere, convenient parking and location in proximity to numerous food and retail establishments, including Old Town Plaza. The Library offers special opportunities to bring

## CHARLOTTESVILLE'S DOWNTOWN MALL

Charlottesville's downtown pedestrian mall is an active space during the day and at night with a collection of art galleries, theaters, shops and restaurants.



Photo sources: (left) Charlottesville Tourism Board; (right) bristolrising.com

families with young children together and to build social connections between older adults, young parents, and relevant community services. In addition to creating an activity hub in the downtown, the attached parking garage provides additional parking for visitors during library off hours.

The proposed concepts for an enlarged Kitty Pozer Garden across from the library has the potential for serving as a

unique gathering space in Old Town Fairfax for parents, children, young adults, seniors, and nearby workers. The preliminary concept approved by City Council in January 2012 for the block bounded by University Drive, North Street, Old Lee Highway and Main Street includes a public plaza, water fountain, gazebo, permanent holiday tree, walking paths, bike racks, space for tables, chairs and benches and a permeable parking lot that could also function as a farmer's market space.

Kitty Pozer Garden



## DETERMINING NEED

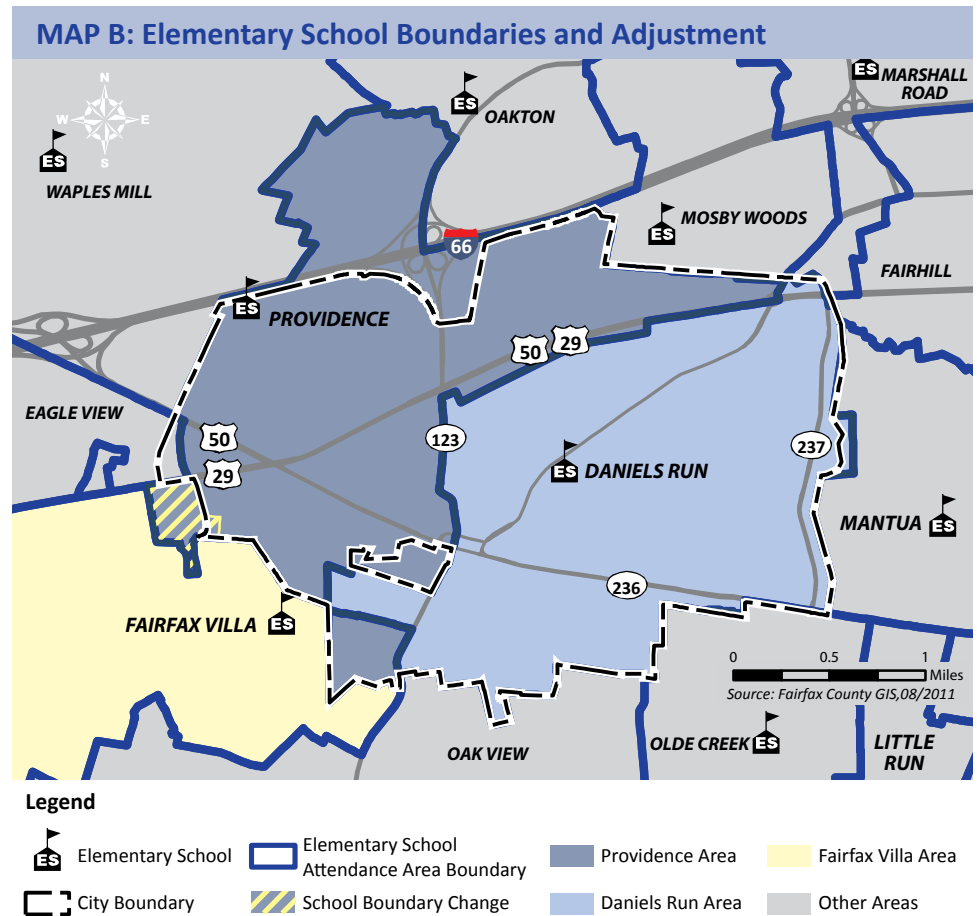
While determining the need for public spaces, cultural arts or performing facilities is often a matter of community preference (discussed further in the Best Practices/ Learning from Others section), capacity measures and state and national standards can assist in assessing school and park facilities. In addition to assessing the current inventory of public amenities, it is also important to recognize the effects of changes in demographics and lifestyles that influence public facilities needs and recreation issues and trends.



### Schools

According to the latest School Board calculations, all of the City's school facilities are either over or at capacity. Short term solutions include maximizing existing space and the installation of temporary classrooms. A long term solution may include a regional boundary adjustment. Of the total population for each school County students account for 1 percent of Daniels Run, 32 percent of Providence, 63 percent of Lanier and 64 percent of Fairfax High.

Fairfax County Public Schools Facilities Planning Office produces school enrollment projections by grade level annually and provides school boundary adjustment studies and recommendations. In February 2011, the Fairfax County School Board approved the Southwestern Boundary Study which affected the boundaries of 24 elementary schools including Providence in the City. According to the study, recommended enrollment for Providence in the 2015-2016 school year should be 897, 199 students less than is currently projected. Providence's highest enrollment since 1993 was in 2010 at 86 students over capacity. The boundary adjustment (see Map B) reallocated students in the



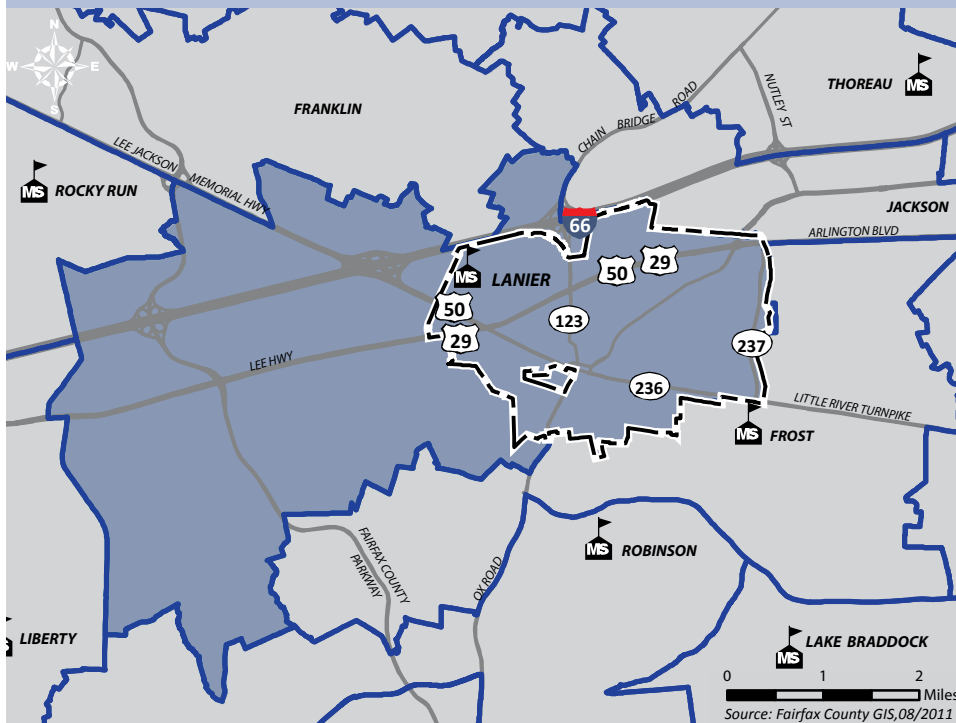
southwest corner of the enrollment area from Providence to Fairfax Villa. The change took effect during the 2011-2012 school year. Although the adjustment relocated 32 students the net effect was only a decrease of 15 students. The projected enrollments still far exceed capacity and staff recommendations. There are not currently any plans to adjust the boundaries of Lanier Middle (see Map C) or Fairfax High (see Map D).

**TABLE A: City of Fairfax Schools Capacity/Enrollment**

School	2011 Capacity	2005 Actual Enrollment	2011 Actual Enrollment	2011 Percentage of Capacity	2012 Projected Enrollment	2016 Projected Enrollment
Fairfax High	2,402	2,070	2,640	110%	2,690	3,052
Lanier Middle	1,253	979	1,164	93%	1,290	1,483
Daniels Run	703	767	766	109%	774	771
Providence	843	763	914	108%	971	1,098

Source: Fairfax City School Board Work Session, Nov., 2011.

MAP C: Middle School Boundaries



## Legend



Middle School

Middle School Attendance Area Boundary  
 City Boundary

Lanier Area  
 Other Areas

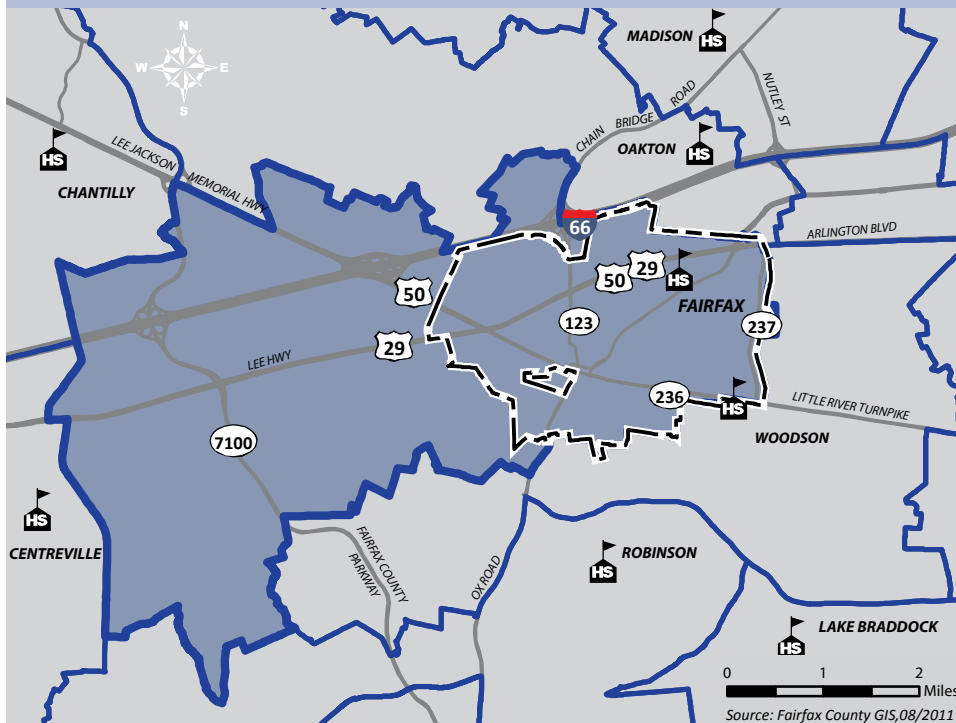
Fairfax High School



Lanier Middle School



MAP D: High School Boundaries



## Legend



High School

High School Attendance Area Boundary  
 City Boundary

Fairfax Area  
 Other Areas

Daniels Run Elementary School



Providence Elementary School



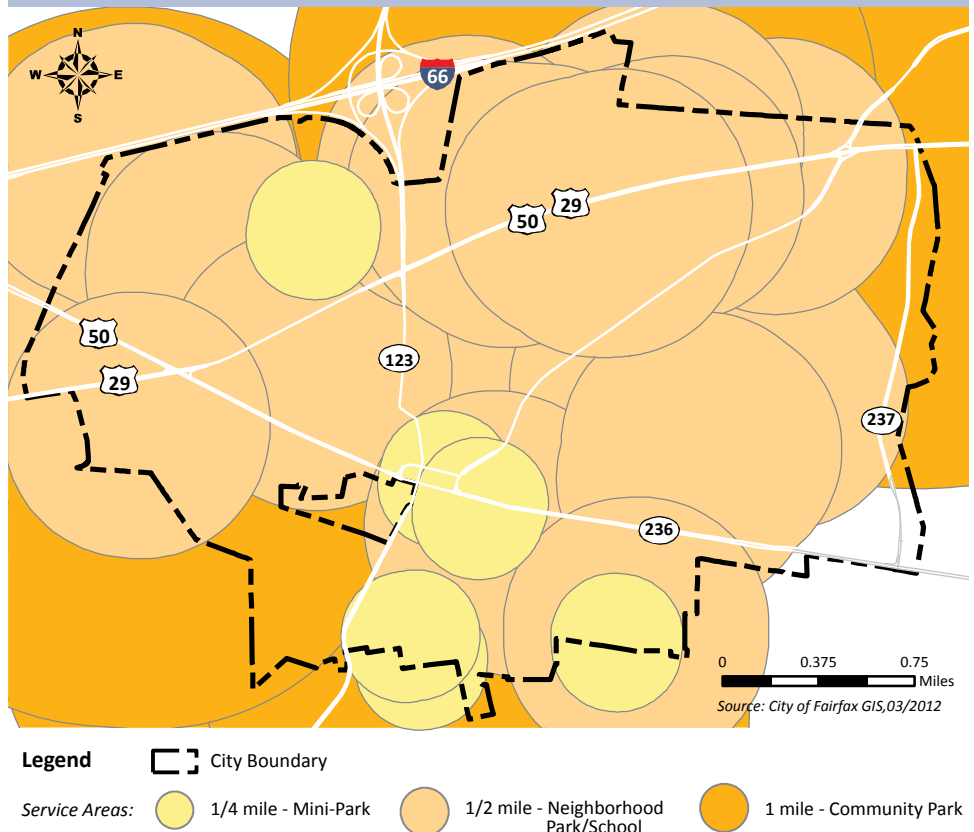
### Parks and Recreation

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has established park and recreation standards as an expression of acres of park land per unit of population. The figure of 10 acres per 1,000 persons, which has been in place since 1981, is the commonly accepted standard for park and recreation needs used by a majority of communities. Recreation activities are also measured in number of units (i.e. courts, diamonds, etc.) per population. Lately there has been a shift towards a level of service standard based on residents' needs.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) latest guidelines for parks, recreation, open space and greenways seem to taking a different "systems" approach to determining the appropriate amount of each type of amenity. This new approach seems to reconsider the previous benchmark of 10 acres of park land for every 1,000 people as possibly deficient in today's recreation and open space environment. An alternative method recognizes that each community has its own unique blend of social and economic characteristics that should be considered in order to identify the most appropriate range, quantity and quality of recreational facilities within fiscal limits.

Based on the Virginia Outdoors Plan area standards, the supply of City park land, as well as the distribution and range of park types, is more than adequate to meet the needs of City residents. Although there appears to be adequate park acreage to serve City residents, there may be a need for additional amenities such as playgrounds and sport courts within those areas based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and Commonwealth of Virginia standards and usage data.

MAP E: Park Service Areas



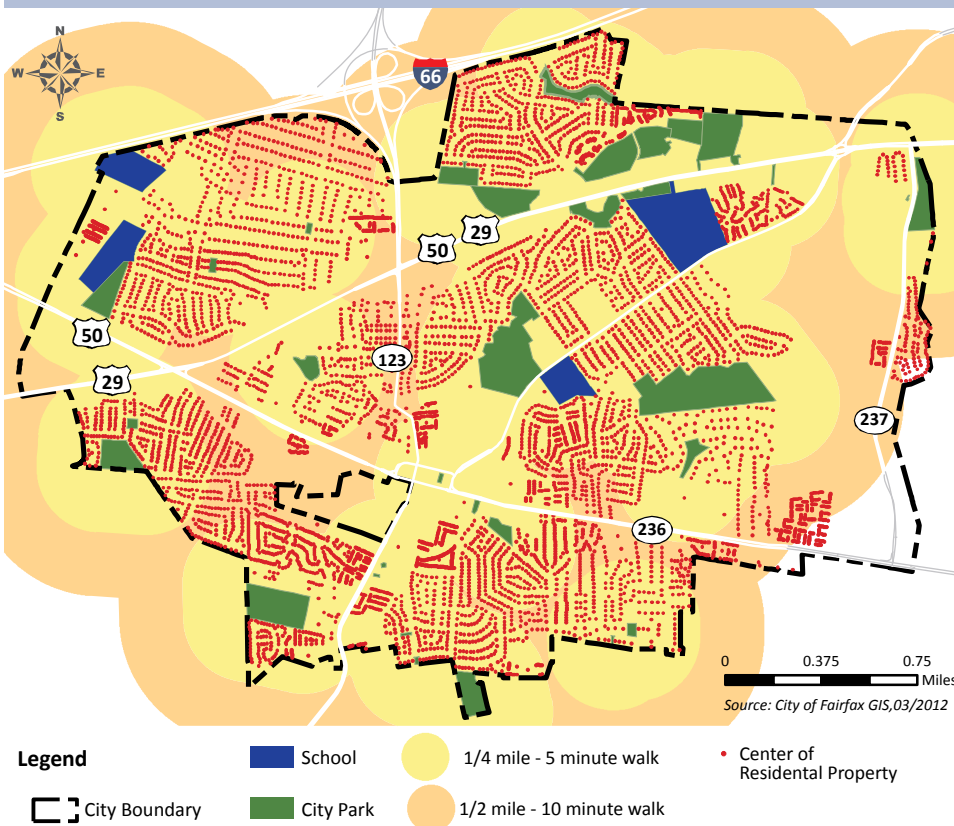
**The 2011 Virginia Outdoors Survey found that over two-thirds (67.6%) of respondents indicated hiking and walking trails as the most needed outdoor recreation.**

Creek along side a trail at Daniels Run Park





## MAP F: Proximity to Parks



According to a 2010 report from the Centers for Disease Control,

**only 1 out of 5 children in the U.S.**

**lives within a half-mile of a park or playground.**

**98.7%**

**of residential properties in the City of Fairfax are located within 1/2 mile or a**

**10 to 15 minute walk**

**from a park or school.**

Based on standard service areas for the various park types, Map E shows there are no major gaps in the current park and school service areas and only the southeast corner of the City, which is predominantly commercial, is not within the standard service areas. According to the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, "With many populated areas dealing with more traffic congestion and workers commuting longer distances throughout Virginia, user groups desire less travel time to recreation destinations. For many frequently repeated activities, persons indicate a travel time of 15 minutes to 30 minutes is acceptable."

Map F shows that 82% of the residential properties in the City are within a quarter mile or 5-minute walk from a park or school. An additional 17% are more than a quarter mile but less than half a mile or 10-minute walk. Residents living within a half-mile of a community park are considered to have their neighborhood park needs met. Only 1.3% (or 85 residential properties) are more than half a mile from a City park or school. As discussed earlier, national standards can provide an acceptable starting

*Children playing at Van Dyck Park*



guideline for the provision of parks and open spaces, however a more thorough and accurate analysis of the City's park system would provide a more comprehensive view of the local demand with growing senior, youth and family populations, unique issues and citizen expectations for recreational resources.

TABLE B: National Standard Park Types and Criteria

<i>Park Type</i>	<i>General Description</i>	<i>Size Criteria</i>	<i>Service Radius</i>	<i>Acres per 1,000 Population</i>	<i>Representative City Parks</i>	<i>City Inventory Acreage</i>	<i>City acres per 1,000 pop.</i>
<b>Mini-Parks</b>	Offer specialized facilities that serve a centralized or limited population or specific group such as young children or senior citizens.	2500 sq. ft. to 1 acre	< ¼ mile/ 5 minute walk	0.25 to 0.5	School Street Park, University Drive Park, Kitty Pozer Garden, Cobbdale Park, Fairchester Woods Park, Westmore Park	1.5	0.07
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	Designed specifically to accommodate residents living within the immediately surrounding area. They are often characterized by active recreational facilities such as baseball and soccer fields, but should also incorporate some passive recreational areas for picnicking and nature-study.	1 to 10 acres	½ mile/ 10 minute walk	1 to 2	Ted Grefe Park, Pat Rodio Park, Ratcliffe Park, Shiloh Street Park	17.9	0.79
<b>Community Parks</b>	Intermediate in size and are able to accommodate visitors from the surrounding community and multiple neighborhoods. These sites focus on both the developed aspects of the park, such as playfields and tennis courts, as well as the natural-resource amenities.	5 to 20 acres	1 to 2 miles/ 5 minute drive	5 to 8	Van Dyck Park, Dale Lestina Park, Stafford Drive Park, Kutner Park, Thaiss Memorial Park, Draper Drive Park, Ranger Road Park, Providence Park, Green Acres	133.2	5.90
<b>Regional Park</b>	Larger park that provides active and passive recreational opportunities for all City and regional residents and can accommodate large group activities.	100+ acres	30 miles/ 1 hour drive	Variable	Gateway Regional Park	0.1	0.00
<b>Natural Resource Areas</b>	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space and visual aesthetics.	sufficient to protect resources	-	0.7 to 1.0	Ashby Pond Conservatory, Daniels Run Park	51.4	2.28
<b>Linear Parks/ Greenways</b>	Established along either a natural corridor, such as a stream valley, or ridgeline converted to recreational use, a canal, scenic road, or other route. An open-space connector linking parks, natural reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas.	n/a		2	Wilcoxon Park, Willow Wood Open Space, Stafford Open Space, Rebel Run Open Space, Country Club Hills Commons	35.2	1.56

## BEST PRACTICES / LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Allocating scarce resources for public facilities and lands is a challenge for many cities and counties. A thorough needs assessment is a critical step that should be completed prior to the establishment of goals and objectives for future plans and allocation of resources. Once the needs are determined, innovative partnerships and funding sources can help implement those plans and maintain the level of service desired. Below are a few examples of the tools municipalities and developers are using to meet these challenges.

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS

#### Surveys - State

##### Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

The Virginia Outdoor Plan (VOP) gathers information from the entire state and analyzes trends by region every five years. The 2007 VOP recognized changing demographics affecting the demand of resources to meet the needs of an aging population, including an increased desire for passive recreation such as walking trails. Issues identified in the 2005 public meetings for the VOP regarding the effects of demographic and lifestyle changes include:

- ⇒ Busy lives and over-scheduled family activities limit impromptu outdoor recreation.
- ⇒ Commuting constraints including traffic congestion, air quality advisories and longer commutes limit leisure time.
- ⇒ Increasing cultural diversity brings varied outdoor ethics and attitudes and a need for multilingual outdoor education.
- ⇒ There is declining quality of life and livability of urban areas due to insufficient open space.
- ⇒ There is greater division between the socio-economic status of citizens.

The 2011 Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS) found the youngest respondents (18 to 24) tended to express greater perceived needs in a variety of areas than did older respondents.

#### Surveys - Local

##### Fairfax County

In 2002, Fairfax County's consultant collected public input through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, public forums and through the Park Authority's web site. Based on the findings from the public outreach, the Park Authority Board's 10-year capital improvements plan identified and prioritized near, intermediate and long-term park improvements.

##### City of Alexandria

During May and June of 2011, the City of Alexandria worked with a consultant to conduct a Needs Assessment Survey through a combination of mailings and phone calls. A seven-page survey was mailed to a random sample of 3,000 households. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey.

##### Leesburg

In March of 2011, the Town of Leesburg Parks and Recreation Department worked with consultants to conduct a Parks and Recreation Needs Analysis to evaluate current service levels and future needs for parks and recreation programs, facilities and amenities. The outreach included face-to-face public input opportunities, a community wide web-based survey and a targeted text message survey.

##### Baltimore, Maryland

In 2009, the City of Baltimore began implementation of a yearly Baltimore Citizen Survey aimed at identifying trends in behavior and attitudes regarding quality of life indicators and City services. A representative sample of 18,000 citizens was contacted by phone in both English and Spanish. In 2011 an online survey option was added, although the survey found that the online respondents were "a self-selected group of higher-income and better educated residents of Baltimore City as compared to the average City resident." In addition to the telephone and online surveys, the City also produces a series of topic papers each year to address responses to key questions and issues in each planning district.



### *Level of Service (LOS) Standards*

The Code of Virginia (Sections 15.2-2223-2280) permits municipalities to identify lands, facilities or services that may require expansion, widening, or any other type of change necessary to maintain adequacy of those facilities and/or services for future development. Level of service (LOS) standards act as benchmarks to measure the quantity and/or quality of government facilities or services and can be used to determine at what point a facility no longer meets the needs of the constituency. The types of services that are measured include schools, transportation, parks, libraries, emergency services, water utilities, wastewater utilities, and solid waste management. There are two types of LOS Standards; capital capacity and operational effectiveness. This tool is only effective when a property requires rezoning under Virginia law. LOS can also be adopted into the comprehensive plan to assist with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to address lands not requiring a rezoning. This tool typically involves a fiscal impact analysis of the property. Virginia municipalities that currently use LOS include:

- ⇒ “The City of Chesapeake requires all rezoning applications to be subject to level of service standards for roads, schools and sewer capacity. If the proposed development fails any of the standards articulated in the plan, the staff recommends denial of the application. The policy exempts a development that will have minimal impact on schools and roads.” (Virginia APA)
- ⇒ “Prince William County has linked the demand for public services created by new development with the County’s fiscal ability to provide those services at the level of service standards set forth in the plan. If the development does not meet the LOS established in the plan, either a proffer for improvements or cash proffer can be used to offset the impact.” (Virginia APA)
- ⇒ Spotsylvania County uses LOS to monitor existing and plan for future facility and service deficiencies in the CIP. Each department responsible for a facility or service files an annual report to the Board of Supervisors including steps taken to maintain or exceed current LOS and proposals for new LOS if

necessary. Policies to achieve these goals include directing growth towards Primary Development Boundary areas for infill, proffers, encouraging special districts and public-private partnerships to pay for needed infrastructure and requiring rezoning of large scale development to finance a county-independent analysis by a credentialed industry source of the impacts and provide mitigation.

### **FUNDING TOOLS**

#### *Public-Private Partnerships*

Public-private partnerships create an opportunity for private developers, educational institutions, non-profits, community groups and other non-governmental organizations to work with local government entities to achieve a common purpose. Similar agreements and partnerships that have benefitted the City include the construction of the Sherwood Community Center, renovation of historic structures, installation of new playground equipment, and funding for sports fields. The Stacy C. Sherwood Center was constructed with funds from a \$5 million donation from Geraldine Sherwood, wife of Stacy C. Sherwood. Historic Fairfax City Inc. (HFCI), a non-profit group created by the City Council, raises funds to renovate many of the historic buildings in the City including Blenheim. Pohanka Lexus donated \$20,000 for new play equipment at Van Dyck Park through the Legacy for Fairfax Program which allows businesses and residents to make donations to the City's park system. The Fairfax Police Youth Club and Fairfax Little League are part of an eight year payment agreement to fund the bond repayment for turf fields at Draper Drive Park, Stafford Drive Park, Fairfax High School Stalnaker Field and the baseball Field at Providence Elementary Field #3 for the use of those facilities.

Under the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002 (PPEA), Virginia’s counties, cities and other public bodies can now partner with the private sector to design, construct, finance and operate almost any public facility. Under the PPEA, either the public body can solicit private proposals for a specific need or the private sector can identify the need for a new

public building or infrastructure and offer an unsolicited proposal to the public body. The Act provides enough flexibility to enable the private sector to design financial packages that will make projects viable, such as user fees or service payments necessary to create the revenue streams to fund a qualifying project.

The City of Virginia Beach advertised a public notice for the sale or lease of the City owned 25th Street parking lot for a public parking facility including mixed use development in accordance with the PPEA in October 2011. The language in the solicitation demonstrates the broad applicability of PPEA in Virginia, "The public parking facility including mixed use development would accommodate additional local parking with related residential, entertainment, commercial or a mix of these uses. The accepted proposal would add parking spaces to the existing inventory, offer additional domicile choices in the Resort Strategic Growth Area, create a year round indoor skydiving venue, generate additional tax revenues, and bolster tourism."

Partnerships with "friends-of-parks" groups, neighbors, businesses, non-profits and other municipal departments can play a big role in maximizing benefits of parks. For example, the "Medical Mile" in Little Rock's Arkansas River Trail is sponsored by the doctors at Heart Clinic Arkansas. The greenway includes a wellness promenade, mind-body-spirit entry plaza, playgrounds, sprayground, picnic areas, sculptures and informational exhibits on health topics.

The most well-known example of a successful public-private partnership is the Central Park Conservancy. The Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 1980 to manage Central Park in New York City. The Conservancy provides more than 85% of Central Park's annual \$20 million operating budget and is responsible for all basic care of the park. It raises funds to maintain the park through fund-raising events, volunteer work and donations from individuals, private companies and foundations. Over 100 companies participate as corporate partners, which in turn receive a range of employee and company benefits including staff-led walking tours, sports clinics, exercise classes and summer chess programs.

Arkansas's "Medical Mile"



Photos source: drawingontheland.com

New York's Central Park



Photo source: UCLA Alumni

Public-Private Partnerships have also been used to fund school construction and renovation. A report by the Appleseed Foundation, a nonprofit network of 17 public interest justice centers, identified several examples of public-private school funding options which could also be applied to other public facilities:

- ⇒ **Sale of Assets** – The public facility uses the funds from the sale of any extra property to finance the necessary construction on the remaining property.
- ⇒ **Sale/leaseback** – The land is sold to a developer, who then builds the facility on the purchased property and leases the building to the municipality. The developer also has the ability to rent the facility to other users when facility is not in use.
- ⇒ **Lease/leaseback** – Similar to above except the developer is leasing the property from the municipality. The developer never owns the property or the building. The developer still constructs the facility and the municipality makes long-term (20 to 30 year) lease payments to cover the construction costs. The developer is also able to lease the facility to other organizations for their use as noted previously.
- ⇒ **Nonprofit Participation** – Non-profit organizations eligible for tax exempt bonds use these bonds to purchase the site with agreements to build or renovate the facility. The municipality makes long-term lease payments to the nonprofit.
- ⇒ **Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT)** – An REIT is a pass-through entity for federal income tax purposes that negotiates leases, sales, and property purchases, manages construction and in turn is paid a rent/management fee by the municipality. An advantage of using a REIT is that it would open the construction process to market competition, lowering construction and renovation costs.

In October 2011, Senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner introduced legislation to allow the use of historic tax credits to rehabilitate aging schools referred to as “The Rehabilitation of Historic Schools Act of 2011.” Specifically the legislation would offer tax credits to private investors who partner with municipalities to update schools that

qualify for historic designation, typically structures that are 50 years or older. Private partners would need to purchase the historic public school and then lease it back to the school district. This bill or resolution is in the first stage of the legislative process and would typically be considered by committee next. A study in 2009 estimated that almost 500 schools in Virginia could qualify. Although the City's schools would not qualify, there could be potential in the future to use historic tax credits on other public facilities.

## IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

### *Conditional Zoning/Proffers*

The Code of Virginia (Section 15.2-2298) allows the zoning ordinance of any locality to “include and provide for voluntary proffering in writing, by the owner, of reasonable conditions” in addition to what is required by the ordinance as part of a rezoning or amendment provided the conditions are reasonably related to the rezoning and are in conformance with the comprehensive plan. Reasonable conditions or proffers may include land, infrastructure, cash or other conditions or constraints on the use of the property. Proffers cannot be addressed for by-right development. Once accepted by the governing body these conditions become part of the zoning ordinance for the subject property.

Section 110-7 of the City of Fairfax Code provides details for the procedures for acceptance of proffers. Generally the applicant of a project that requires a change of zoning proposes proffers in writing as part of the application presented before the Planning Commission (Commission). The Commission may recommend additional proffers to the City Council as part of its consideration of the application.

Recent developments that have included proffers that benefitted the City's parks, open space and trails include Canfield Village on Chain Bridge Road and Main Street Residences on Main Street. Canfield Village, a mixed use commercial and townhouse project, included a contribution of \$1000 per townhouse unit for improvements to Providence Park and a clause that the \$120,000 provided for a traffic light be spent by the City



on improvements to the sidewalks and crosswalk along Chain Bridge Road and bicycle and pedestrian access improvements along Canfield Street if it is determined that the traffic light is not required. Main Street Residences, a townhouse development located on the corner of Judicial Drive and Main Street, included a stream valley dedication of approximately three acres of open space for public park use, the construction of a trail through the stream valley and preservation of a portion of the Manassas Gap Railroad Bed including installation of a historic marker in the southeastern corner of the property.

All proffers must be voluntarily made, however some jurisdictions like Fauquier, Chesterfield, Accomack and Orange counties have developed policy guidelines based on level of service standards. Orange County's Proffer Policy Guide states "The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines as to the issues to be addressed through proffers during the rezoning process, including a fee schedule of suggested cash contributions for schools, fire and rescue, parks and recreation, library needs, roads, water, solid waste and other government facilities that are intended to lessen the impacts of a rezoning."

### Co-location

Co-location of public facilities is becoming an increasingly common practice, particularly for its perceived benefits of resource savings, increased efficiency and synergy of services and enhanced sense of community. The Comprehensive Plan for Tysons Corner calls for civic uses to be co-located whenever possible,"such as a library with an arts center or a fire station with a police station." The City of Fairfax has already implemented this tool in several ways: for example, Providence Elementary and a recreation baseball field; the community garden, Veterans

Amphitheater and City Hall; the Sherwood Center and Police headquarters; and the Senior Center and many other recreation and class activities at Green Acres.

Research has acknowledged the benefit of co-location of facilities. Professors at George Mason University's School of Public Policy and Department of Geography and Geoinformation Science authored an article "Supporting planning to co-locate public facilities: A case study from Loudoun County, Virginia" in 2010 to "undertake a retrospective cost-benefit analysis for a co-located elementary school and library." The results highlighted the land acquisition cost savings and addressed the need to research the social benefits of co-location.

### Mixed Use Zoning

Some jurisdictions have begun incorporating public facilities' offices and recreation centers in mixed use developments. In San Francisco, a local affordable housing developer is working with the City to develop a new mixed-use senior living facility. The first floor and half of the second floor will house a senior-services facility. Above that, 150 affordable apartments for independent seniors will be built. The Comprehensive Plan for Tysons Corner in Fairfax County calls for 20 athletic fields, and the area will also be served by private facilities, small-footprint public facilities, and flexible public indoor spaces. In June 2008, the Arlington County Board approved a mixed-use community center and affordable housing development project. The community center is proposed to include space for recreational and cultural programs, childhood development programs, human services, and a community learning center.

Mixed use can be used to encourage developers to provide improved pedestrian access, establish linkages to nearby areas and create opportunities for desired uses such as housing, cultural or recreational facilities by providing incentives to include such amenities and features in exchange for bonuses in addition to basic permitted space. Spokane County, Washington incorporated density bonuses in its zoning code for mixed use projects that incorporate public amenities. A selection from the Spokane County code relating to mixed use is included to the right.

*Police Headquarters and Sherwood Center, 2011 Aerial*



Source: Pictometry

**SELECTIONS FROM THE SPOKANE COUNTY CODE- CHAPTER 14.608 - MIXED-USE ZONE****14.608.250 Floor Area Ratios**

5. If development projects incorporate public amenities, as defined in Section 14.608.260, the floor area ratio may be increased up to the maximum, provided the following criteria are met.
  - a. The public amenity satisfies its design criteria and serves a public purpose in the proposed location.
  - b. The public amenity is directly associated with the use for which the floor area ratio increase is sought.
  - c. The public amenity has a public benefit that is appropriate considering the floor area ratio increase being achieved.

**14.608.260 Public Amenities Allowing Bonus Floor Area Ratio****2. Major Amenities**

*Each public amenity from the following list may allow an increase in the floor area ratio of .5 above the basic allowable floor area ratio up to the maximum floor area ratio*

- a. *Exterior Public Spaces*

*A plaza or courtyard, with a minimum area of 400 square feet or 2% of the total interior floor space of the development, whichever is greater.*

- b. *Public Art*

*Public art includes sculptures, murals, inlays, mosaics, and other two-dimensional or three-dimensional works, as well as elements integrated into the design of a project (e.g. fountain) that are designed and crafted by one or more artists. Such artists must be listed on a registry of either the Washington State Arts Commission or the Spokane Arts Commission. To receive the floor area ratio bonus, public art must be documented at a value that is at least 1% of the value of construction.*

- c. *Through-Block Pedestrian Connection*

*A through-block pedestrian connection is a continuous walkway accessible to the public that provides access through a development to a street or other pedestrian facility that would not otherwise be connected. The walkway shall be at least 10 feet in width, paved with decorative paving, and lighted for nighttime use. It may be covered or open to the sky.*

- d. *Residential Units*

*Residential units shall comprise at least 25% of the total floor area.*

- e. *Structured Parking for 50% or more of the required spaces.*

## EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION

### *Hylton Performing Arts Center*

The Hylton Performing Arts Center, a \$63 million state-of-the-art performance facility on the Prince William Campus of George Mason University that opened to the public in May 2010, was constructed through a partnership between Prince William County, George Mason University, the City of Manassas, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the private sector. The state-of-the-art performing arts center houses a four-tier 1,121 seat main theater, along with a flexible, open space 300-seat theater and facilities to support the arts both at the University and in the surrounding community. In addition to the educational and cultural benefits of the project, it has helped the community economically as well. The Center is staffed by more than 20 full-time and part-time positions and now after its opening the University anticipates the Center to bring a direct economic impact of nearly \$7 million annually with increased demand for restaurants, stores and other businesses.

*Hylton Performing Arts Center*



Photo sources: (top) Jon Rachetti; (bottom) robertdavisinc.com

*Newport News Public Art*



Photos source: Newport News Public Art Foundation

### *Newport News Public Art Foundation*

Public art can inspire pride of place, mark special places and occasions and define a sense of place and identity as a cultural landmark. In 2011, Newport News decided to use public art as a catalyst for economic and community revitalization. The City's Public Art Foundation invited internationally respected sculptors to create public installations at key locations throughout the City. Funding for the pieces was provided by the City, developers, a local former professional sports player and the residents surrounding the proposed pieces. The Public Art Foundation has created a map and audio tour to encourage residents and visitors to learn more about each piece located around the City. Community engagement was a key feature in the process including community events near the proposed sites where the public was able to meet and talk with the artist; the same events were also played on the local cable station; residents gathered to watch the installations of each piece; and as the pieces were dedicated church congregations, clubs, community centers, and citizens were all invited to attend.



### Farmers' Markets

Farmers' Markets have become a popular use of open civic spaces. In Alexandria the parking lot of Ben Brenman Park is transformed into a colorful display of fruits, vegetables and pastries every Sunday morning from May to November for the West End Farmers Market. The Historic Roanoke City Market located in a structured facility in the heart of the downtown is open year-round, seven days a week, and closes only on Christmas and New Year's Day. It has been recognized as a "Great American Public Place" by the Lyndhurst Foundation. Marion Square in Charleston, South Carolina occupies 10 acres and accommodates a number of different urban activities, including a farmers' market, a fountain, a performance area and a number of historic monuments.

The City of Fairfax's Saturday Community Market and Sunday Farmers' Market, held from May to October, are organized by the Downtown Fairfax Coalition and are located at the parking lot behind the Wells Fargo Bank and adjacent to the Historic Fairfax County Courthouse.

## CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The City of Fairfax has shown its dedication to providing the best facilities and recreation opportunities for its citizens. The parks and recreation facilities are award-winning and many of the public facilities have been renovated in some fashion in the last ten years. Maintaining this level of service requires significant investment which is not always available, especially during difficult economic times. Determining the needs of the City's facilities, park lands, operating and capital budgets will assist in investing wisely and making the most of citizens' tax dollars. Identifying and pursuing alternative and innovative funding would go a long way in ensuring the level of service that the citizens and visitors have come to expect can be maintained and exceeded even during difficult budget years.

*City of Fairfax Farmers' Market*



*Photos source: Brenda Snyder*

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